

BUILDING THE TALENT PIPELINE: Three Steps to Attract and Retain Educators



Battelle *for Kids*



There is no profession more important to the success of our country than teaching.

Behind every great entrepreneur, scientist, or civic leader is a teacher who engages, mentors, motivates, and instills a belief in students that they can reach their goals. However, at a time when talented educators are needed more than ever, fewer young people are pursuing a career in education, and school districts are struggling to attract and retain teachers.

HOW CAN DISTRICTS ADDRESS TEACHER SHORTAGES?

Like a weather map showing some areas of the country experiencing sunshine and warm temperatures, others under a dark cloud cover, and still others in the path of a storm that is yet to come, teacher shortage challenges vary from place to place. Some regions are minimally affected, while others are in a state of crisis—as evidenced by recent news stories from rural California (Mader, 2016) and Colorado (Brundin, 2015); Las Vegas, Nevada (Rebora, 2016); and Hawaii (Kubota, 2016). Similarly, some subject areas have an abundance of teachers, and others, including math, science, and special education, are consistently harder to staff (U.S. Department of Education, 2015). Furthermore, changing workforce trends and decreased enrollment in teacher preparation programs may lead to staffing difficulties in the future, even in districts that currently have a stable teaching force.

These complex challenges cannot be solved simply by producing and recruiting more teachers. As research by Ingersoll (2016) shows, teacher shortages result primarily from high rates of turnover, rather than an insufficient supply. Thus, even the best recruitment strategies in the absence of systematic processes for hiring the right people, supporting them, and empowering them to grow professionally may ultimately exacerbate the churn of educators.

ABOUT THIS MONOGRAPH

Knowing that every district faces different challenges with recruiting and retaining teachers, Battelle for Kids developed this monograph to help districts develop customized strategies that work within their unique context. Education leaders can explore:

- A **three-point approach** to help districts identify strengths and next steps
- **Examples** of how districts across the country are working to address shortages
- A **discussion guide and questions** to help district leaders improve their human capital management systems
- An extensive **repository of potential strategies** to address the educator shortage

As we work to ensure a high-quality teacher in every classroom, the time is ripe for more districts to develop human capital management systems (HCMS) that are equipped not only to navigate current staffing challenges—including providing equitable access to excellent educators for all students—but also to ensure workforce stability well into the future. While human resources (HR) has traditionally been viewed in many fields as a transactional body responsible for recordkeeping, compliance, and payroll, a number of innovative districts are establishing a HCMS in which school and district leaders employ strategic HR practices proven to help build strong talent pipelines in the education sector and beyond.



This monograph aims to highlight promising efforts, foster dialogue and the sharing of ideas, and help districts maximize their capacity to attract and retain teachers.

Based on research and lessons learned through Battelle for Kids’ (BFK) partnerships with districts over the past 15 years, we outline three essential steps for building talent pipelines:

1. Use data to **assess** strengths, needs, and challenges.
2. Develop a **plan** to attract and retain talented teachers.
3. **Implement** and continuously **improve** the plan.

The changing talent market requires districts to develop a new kind of HCMS—one that is data-driven, strategic, and proactive—to ensure teachers are valued and supported, and that education remains a career path that talented professionals believe is worth pursuing. Building the educator talent pipeline will take time and resources; however, there are steps districts can take now to strengthen their HCMS.

TIP!

See the discussion guide on pages 12–13 for essential questions district leaders should consider when developing a strategic HCMS.



STEP 1: USE DATA TO ASSESS STRENGTHS, NEEDS, AND CHALLENGES

A number of recent studies suggest that staffing shortages may stem from national workforce trends, conditions within the local talent pipeline, and aspects of the district itself.

TEACHER TALENT PIPELINE: UNDER THE MICROSCOPE

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS SHOW DECLINING INTEREST IN TEACHING

From 2010 to 2014, “the number of ACT-tested high school graduates interested in education majors or professions decreased by more than 16 percent, while the number of all graduates who took the ACT increased by nearly 18 percent.”

(Source: ACT, Inc., 2015)



FEWER COLLEGE STUDENTS PURSUING A CAREER IN EDUCATION

Between the 2008–2009 and 2012–2013 school years, **enrollment in teacher preparation programs decreased by more than 30 percent.**

(Source: U.S. Department of Education, 2015)

SMALLER POOL OF TEACHERS WITH ALTERNATIVE CERTIFICATIONS

Between 2013 and 2016, **applications for Teach for America dropped 35 percent.**

(Source: Teach for America, 2016)



SCHOOL DISTRICTS STRUGGLE TO RECRUIT AND RETAIN TEACHERS

Teacher staffing problems are primarily due to high teacher turnover, with data showing that **between 40 percent and 50 percent of new teachers leave the occupation within the first five years.** Turnover is particularly high among minority teachers.

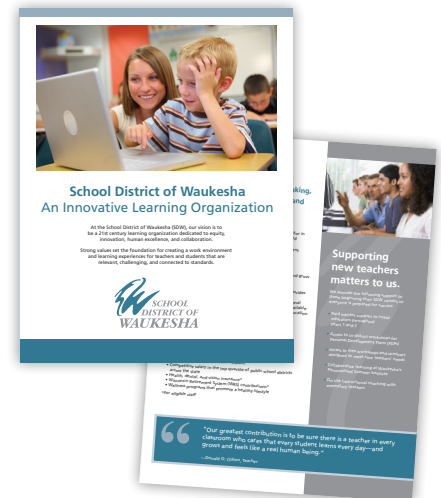
(Source: Ingersoll, 2016)

Together, these and other possible contributors to teacher shortages create a web of challenges that may cause districts to struggle to attract and/or retain educators. Thus, each district must have systems in place to identify shortage areas, uncover potential causes of those shortages, and determine how to leverage organizational strengths and navigate identified challenges to strengthen its talent pipeline. Essential to the effectiveness of these systems is access to timely and high-quality HR data.

Deloitte's (2016) four-stage maturity model of organizational HR data use highlights the potential of data to uncover local workforce trends and develop a strong HCMS that can respond to those trends. In the **Reactive** stage, organizations measure only operational efficiency and compliance. The **Proactive** stage goes a step further by using data for benchmarking and decision making. In the **Strategic** stage, data analysis uncovers root causes and helps identify solutions. Finally, the **Predictive** stage uses data to anticipate needs, mitigate risk, and support optimal organizational functioning. BFK has helped several school districts use data analytics to attract and retain teachers, including Wisconsin's School District of Waukesha (SDW) and Tulsa Public Schools (TPS) in Oklahoma.

SDW recently worked with BFK to conduct a market analysis to understand the local labor market and the district's place within it. SDW leaders first identified hard-to-staff positions, including math, chemistry, special education, and bilingual education. Then, the district's teacher salaries and benefits were compared to those of surrounding districts. SDW teacher salaries were also compared to those for non-teaching jobs similar to the identified high-need teaching positions (e.g., chemists, financial specialists). Additionally, district staff were surveyed regarding their satisfaction with compensation policies and offerings, and the types of rewards they would find most fulfilling.

Based on the collection of findings, SDW leaders explored ways compensation might be adjusted, but—knowing that the district could not always compete with the salaries of many private sector jobs—also looked internally to identify other organizational strengths that might be attractive to potential applicants. These strengths—including academic achievements and awards, the district's commitment to professional learning and advancement, proximity to institutions of higher education, and numerous programs to support new teachers—were highlighted in a branding and recruitment campaign to increase the overall applicant pool. SDW also partnered with the Milwaukee Teacher Education Center to offer an alternative pathway to licensure for teachers in shortage areas.





TULSA

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

As the second largest district in Oklahoma, Tulsa Public Schools (TPS) employs 7,000 staff who are committed to providing a quality learning experience for nearly 40,000 students every day. With a growing number of students, a shortage of teachers across Oklahoma, and a limited budget and resources, continually finding qualified candidates has become challenging. In partnership with Battelle for Kids, TPS has made significant progress in addressing these challenges by using data to forecast and address staffing needs. The district's strategies include:

- **Data Analytics:** Ongoing data collection and analyses uncover staffing needs, the sources of TPS' highest-performing teachers, and the effectiveness of various recruitment efforts.
- **Branding:** Updated marketing materials and a new "Careers" webpage highlight district accomplishments, TPS staff, and the city as a great place to work, live, and stay.
- **Strategic Recruitment:** Based on data identifying social media as one of TPS' most effective recruitment channels, the district now prioritizes online recruiting.
- **Early Hiring:** Student teachers' performance is assessed using TPS' teacher evaluation instrument. High performers are identified and offered early contracts.

"THROUGH EARLY HIRING, STRONG PARTNERSHIPS WITH HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS, AND A SIGNIFICANT ONLINE RECRUITMENT CAMPAIGN, AMONG OTHER EFFORTS, WE WERE ABLE TO FILL EVERY VACANCY BY THE FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL IN THE FALL OF 2015, DESPITE SEVERE TEACHER SHORTAGES."

—Talia Shaull, Chief Talent Officer, Tulsa Public Schools

To date, these efforts have helped TPS to:

HIRE
nearly
500
individuals

in certified-teaching positions and fill every teacher vacancy in preparation for the 2015–2016 school year—despite a statewide teacher shortage—ensuring that every classroom is led by a certified teacher

Receive
61,000
VISITS
to the "Careers" website

Establish a compelling and cohesive brand, across all recruitment platforms

INCREASE
the number of
ELIGIBLE CANDIDATES
by **287%**

GROW the number of
APPLICATIONS
by **199%**

Build internal morale and reinforce the district's commitment to excellence and supporting its teachers by displaying posters and other materials that recognize TPS educators in every building

- 26%** applied through the redesigned website
- 25%** applied as the result of social media
- 23%** applied based on referrals

Establish relationships with
19 **KEY COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES**
in Oklahoma and surrounding states from which TPS' most effective teachers are recruited

more than half of which came from the virtual marketing and social media recruitment campaign



STEP 2: DEVELOP A PLAN TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN EDUCATORS

Data serve as the common thread between well-structured HCMs, but the strategies districts employ based on their data vary greatly. This diversity is reflected in the following locally developed practices districts across the country are using to attract and retain teachers.

ATTRACT

In an analysis of teacher turnover in five school districts, the National Commission on Teaching and America's Future (2007) documented costs of up to \$828,000 for recruitment alone in one large district. Given districts' limited budgets, it is essential that recruitment practices are grounded in a clear understanding of local shortage areas to ensure resources are allocated strategically. Examples from two Ohio districts—Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) and South Central Local Schools (SCLS)—show how districts' unique needs can result in the development of different recruitment goals and processes.

Data from CMSD found that, in 2012, 85 percent of the district's students identified as persons of color while the same was true of only a quarter of its teachers. Thus, CMSD made diversity a focus of its recruitment efforts. Behind the TeachCleveland brand, the district launched a new recruitment website and social media campaign, created a group of administrators focused on recruiting and retaining top African-American male talent, and strategically visited educator preparation programs and career fairs at historically black colleges and universities. CMSD used weekly data reports to track and adjust recruitment strategies for diversity and high-need subjects, with a goal that teachers of color would comprise 30 percent of new hires. Members of the recruitment team met regularly to review their progress.

In 2014–2015, CMSD exceeded its goal, with 38 percent of newly hired teachers identifying as persons of color (Flanigan, 2016).

South Central's strategy targeted specific positions facing shortages, such as speech and language pathology. The district partnered with BFK to redesign its organizational brand and help increase the size of its applicant pool, particularly in identified shortage areas. A major priority for the rebranding campaign was to tell the district's story from the perspective of its students and staff. Through focus groups and interviews, SCLS collected testimonials from individuals at each school, and then used them to create posters and other recruitment materials featuring local students and staff. These resources were not only used to communicate with prospective employees, but were also displayed at each school to help create a consistent brand for the district internally and externally. Following the launch of its new branding and recruitment effort, SCLS received numerous applications that met *preferred* qualifications for speech and language pathologist positions. Additionally, SCLS began to receive applications from individuals living in towns from which the district had never before received interest.

Districts facing chronic shortages may need to employ more intensive strategies to reduce barriers to entry in areas with the greatest need. For example, through the Grow Your Own Illinois program, districts like Chicago Public Schools have found a way to attract teachers from a previously untapped source—their local community. The program develops locally based teacher pipelines through community partnerships, and offers college loan forgiveness for individuals wishing to earn teaching certificates and serve in high-need schools. Urban districts across the country have begun to follow suit, implementing similar programs to fill shortage areas (Ramirez, 2007).

Alaska's Lake and Peninsula School District (LPSD) also uses a grow-your-own approach, in combination with creative recruitment strategies. In response to a challenge facing many rural communities—a limited local supply of teachers—LPSD has established an innovative tutoring program to build a robust teacher pipeline. The district recruits recent college graduates who are all certified educators to serve as tutors in its schools. Participants are primarily December graduates who are recruited in the fall and begin the program in the spring. They receive travel stipends, housing, shopping assistance, and an hourly wage, and are guided through an induction program to acclimate to their new surroundings.

As of 2015—six years after the program began—former tutors comprised more than a third of LPSD's teaching staff. Additionally, the district has found that a number of its tutors wish to stay at LPSD, thereby reducing spring recruiting needs (Hill & Mase, 2015).

“South Central provides an environment where students are offered a variety of courses that will prepare them for success in life. I feel like I'm making a difference.”
James Hong, High School Science Teacher

SOUTH CENTRAL LOCAL SCHOOLS
COMMITTED TO STUDENT SUCCESS

ABOUT SOUTH CENTRAL LOCAL SCHOOLS
All South Central Local Schools are on a mission that is focused on providing our students with high-quality, personalized learning experiences. Our goal is to ensure that every student has the opportunity to succeed in school and in life. We are committed to providing a safe, supportive, and challenging learning environment for all of our students. Our focus is on providing a high-quality education that prepares our students for the future. We are committed to providing a safe, supportive, and challenging learning environment for all of our students. Our focus is on providing a high-quality education that prepares our students for the future.

TIP!
Explore an extensive repository of potential solutions to address the educator shortage on page 14.

Additional variations of the grow-your-own strategy might include providing incentives for employees with associate degrees to earn teaching credentials or for current teachers to become certified in shortage areas, or building partnerships with local high school or college-based organizations for aspiring educators (e.g., Future Teachers of America).

Districts struggling to attract teachers could also consider revising job descriptions for positions in shortage areas to allow for more flexible thinking around what those positions entail or how teachers could be shared across schools. A report by the Rural Opportunities Consortium of Idaho (2015) offers several examples of non-traditional staffing structures that could help maximize students' access to effective teachers in districts facing shortages, such as:

- Multi-classroom leadership models, in which a lead teacher supports less-experienced teachers across multiple buildings;
- Time-technology swaps, in which teacher-led instruction is coupled with online learning monitored by paraprofessionals; and
- Teachers leading lessons via videoconferencing or similar channels.

Innovative recruitment practices, in conjunction with high-quality data, show promise in helping districts mitigate teacher shortage challenges. Yet, as previously noted, strategies for attracting teachers must be coupled with efforts to reduce turnover to be truly effective.



SELECT

Based on studies showing links between employee-organization fit and retention (Baharom, Memon & Salleh, 2014), hiring can be viewed as an opportunity to reduce turnover by ensuring the right people are selected to fill vacant positions. At the same time, hiring processes that take too long to identify the best candidates can put districts at risk for missing out on many highly qualified teachers (Levin & Quinn, 2003). The District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) aims to address both issues through its hiring process, which includes rigorous screening based on multiple data points, a “mutual consent” clause by which teachers and schools work together to determine the best placement for each educator, and an early hiring timeline. The district has found that teachers hired earlier tend to be more effective than those hired later in the summer, and has made a concerted effort to significantly increase the number of teachers hired by June 30th each year (District of Columbia Public Schools, 2016).

Des Moines Public Schools (DMPS) also uses a multiple-data-point approach to identify candidates who have the highest potential for success within the district.

“WE HAVE CHANGED THE WAY WE RECRUIT, INTERVIEW, AND HIRE TEACHERS. WE ARE FAR MORE FOCUSED ON THE SKILLS, ABILITIES, AND KNOWLEDGE POTENTIAL TEACHERS POSSESS THAT ALIGN WITH WHAT OUR DATA AND DEMOGRAPHICS ARE TELLING US WE NEED TO SERVE OUR STUDENTS. MULTI-CULTURAL EXPERIENCES IN TEACHING AND LEADERSHIP ALONG WITH FLUENCY IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE ARE GIVEN ADDITIONAL WEIGHT. MUCH MORE PREDICTIVE PERFORMANCE DATA IS COLLECTED AND REVIEWED PRIOR TO THE CANDIDATE’S SELECTION FOR AN INTERVIEW. WE ALSO HAVE A SCREENER FOR ATTRIBUTES, SUCH AS GRIT, GROWTH MINDSET, COMMUNICATING HIGH EXPECTATIONS, ETC. THAT WE KNOW ARE REQUIRED FOR THE SUCCESS OF OUR STUDENTS.”

—Dr. Anne Sullivan, Chief Human Resources Officer, Des Moines Public Schools

Smaller districts looking to improve their hiring processes on a tight budget might consider leveraging the support of their regional service centers. For example, Ohio’s Muskingum Valley Education Service Center supports its surrounding districts’ hiring efforts by maintaining a centralized list of job postings on its website, conducting fingerprinting and background checks, and administering paraprofessional assessments required for certification (Muskingum Valley Educational Service Center, 2016).



ENGAGE

One of the most promising opportunities for attracting, motivating, and retaining educators is centered on the principles of positive psychology. These include helping employees do what they do best through understanding and utilizing their strengths (Rath, 2007), improving employee engagement (Gallup, 2013), fostering passion and perseverance, or “grit” (Duckworth, 2016), and creating a happier and more positive mind-set (Achor, 2010). Organizations with strong cultures spark more creativity, productivity, better work-life balance, and higher employee satisfaction. School leaders who promote a positive culture are likely to have an edge in addressing issues related to teacher shortages.

However, **Gallup findings reveal that nearly seven in ten teachers are not engaged in their work.** And, teachers are last among all professions Gallup studied in saying their opinions count at work and their supervisors create an open and trusting environment (Busteed, 2014). Teacher engagement matters not only to keep educator talent in the classroom, but also to ensure students are engaged in school, which in turn drives their academic success. A recent report from the Research Alliance for New York City Schools at New York University found that teacher turnover decreased and academic achievement increased in New York City middle schools that improved their learning environment in four areas: leadership and professional development, high academic expectations for students, teacher relationships and collaboration, and school safety and order (Kraft, Marinell, & Yee, 2016).

California’s Long Beach Unified School District (LBUSD) and Ohio’s Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) consortium offer two examples of how districts are using professional development, support, and leadership opportunities to engage teachers at each stage of their career. LBUSD’s annual attrition rate of seven percent is nearly two-thirds lower than the national average for urban districts (Aldeman, Chuong, Mead, & Obbard, 2015), an accomplishment that has been attributed in large part to its strong teacher pipeline and professional development system. First, the district works closely with nearby institutions of higher education to build a locally based pipeline of teachers who have had extensive exposure to Long Beach schools before becoming new employees (Battelle for Kids, 2012). New LBUSD teachers also complete a two-year induction program, in which they develop individualized growth plans, receive formative evaluations and guidance from experienced support providers, engage in ongoing dialogue with other teachers in their cohort, and participate in a variety of professional development opportunities.

The district also invests heavily in professional development for all teachers, with a clear vision and mission statement that drives professional development programs and efforts. Additionally, support is provided across the district by skilled instructional coaches and a Teacher Resource Center that serves as a centralized hub for professional development and instructional resources (Long Beach Unified School District, 2016). For LBUSD, teacher support is much more than just the sum of its parts. It is a carefully integrated system that begins with a strong talent pipeline; maintains a targeted focus on professional development that is responsive to teachers’ needs; and encompasses a core set of values, processes, and a culture the district describes simply as, “The Long Beach Way.”

OhioTIF

In 2010, 23 Ohio school districts—many of which are rural and Appalachian—teamed up with the Ohio Department of Education and BFK to improve their ability to attract and retain excellent educators. The districts received a Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grant from the U.S. Department of Education with the aim of establishing systems of growth, support, and recognition for teachers. Since that time, each district in the Ohio TIF consortium has grounded its comprehensive HCMS in strategies to recognize teachers and support their professional growth, including:

- **Badging:** Teachers earn badges by completing professional development activities related to a variety of topics, such as blended learning, formative instructional practices, student motivation, and project/problem-based learning, based on their needs and interests.
- **Teacher Leadership:** Experienced teachers serve in a variety of district-designed roles to lead professional learning teams, form taskforces to address local needs, and support their colleagues' professional growth.
- **Strategic Compensation:** Compensation systems are aligned with districts' educational improvement goals, and recognize excellence in multiple facets of teaching.

As a result of these efforts:



1,770 teachers and principals have participated in **PROFESSIONAL LEARNING** and are showing evidence of implementation in their practice



411 teachers are participating in the **TEACHER LEADERSHIP ENDORSEMENT PROGRAM** offered through Ohio Dominican University



1,841 students participated in **EXPANDED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES** (dual enrollment, PSEO, AP), an increase of 194 percent over three years (2011–2014)



\$14.8M in **AWARD INCENTIVES PAID** to teachers and principals for meeting and exceeding student achievement and growth goals to date



ALL

teachers and principals have access to **EXPANDED GROWTH AND ACHIEVEMENT DATA** that can be used to inform formative instructional practices

“FOR ME, THE PRIMARY BENEFIT OF THE BADGES APPROACH TO PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT HAS BEEN AN INCREASED MOTIVATION AND ENGAGEMENT. THE BADGES REPRESENT A TANGIBLE MARK OF THE KNOWLEDGE, CONCEPTS, AND STRATEGIES I HAVE BEEN WORKING INTO MY TEACHING STYLE. EACH BADGE ACHIEVED REPRESENTS AN ACCOMPLISHED GOAL.”

—Alan Wells, Science Teacher, Mid-East Career Technical Center

RECOGNIZE

Like the Ohio TIF consortium, a number of districts across the country are looking at ways to recognize teachers. For example, Putnam County School System in Tennessee offers leadership opportunities to help high-performing educators expand their skills and influence while earning additional compensation. The district also reviews its hard-to-staff positions on an annual basis, and offers signing bonuses and annual stipends to teachers in those positions (Putnam County School System, n.d.).

Pittsburgh Public Schools (PPS) also prioritizes teacher recognition by regularly involving teachers in the development of programs and policies. For instance, the district—in collaboration with the Pittsburgh Federation of Teachers (PFT), more than 400 educators and community stakeholders, and BFK—spent five years developing its professional learning and growth system. The district continues to work with teachers to make adjustments to the system based on new research and input from stakeholders (Pittsburgh Public Schools, 2016). PPS also engages the Pittsburgh community in celebrating and supporting teachers through its Teachers Matter campaign (Battelle for Kids, 2014). The district's impact can be measured through the following outcomes connected to the work:



TEACHER PERFORMANCE HAS IMPROVED

15% | **23%** | **49%**
2012–13 | 2013–14 | 2014–15

as demonstrated by the share of teachers who achieved at the highest, or Distinguished level



OFFICIAL FOUR-YEAR GRADUATION RATES HAVE GROWN

68.5% | **72.5%** | **77.4%**
2010–11 | 2011–12 | 2012–13

with notable increases for schools with targeted supports for students in grades 9 and 10, as well as for African-American students



POSITIVE IMPACT ON GRADES 3–8 MATH

ACHIEVEMENT

based on data from the 2013–14 school year (RAND, 2016)



STEP 3: IMPLEMENT AND CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE

Upon developing a plan for attracting and retaining teachers, districts should consider their readiness to implement those plans, including

- Alignment of HCMS functions with organizational priorities and practices;
- High levels of knowledge, skills, and training for individuals involved in managing the HCMS; and
- The ability to monitor progress and drive ongoing improvement and sustainability.

Even the best ideas for improving human capital practices can fail if they are carried out in isolation. As such, Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) in Maryland, one of only a handful of school districts to win the prestigious Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Award, emphasized strategic alignment when making an organizational commitment to “recruit, retain, and develop the best employees in public education.” The district identified human capital management as one of five priorities in its strategic plan, with a focus on increasing the diversity of its teacher workforce and working with MCPS employee associations to foster continuous improvement and provide pathways for the growth and advancement of all staff (Montgomery County Public Schools, 2016). In December 2014, the district launched the MCPS Teacher Workforce Diversity Initiative focused on four key areas—recruitment, selection, retention, and internal talent development (MCPS, 2014a). In support of the initiative, MCPS introduced a new marketing campaign, audited its selection practices to eliminate systemic barriers to hiring teachers with diverse backgrounds, and developed a new grow-your-own program with a focus on recruiting candidates that have been underrepresented in its teacher workforce (MCPS, 2014b). The district also regularly tracks progress toward each goal outlined in its strategic plan.

Another aspect of system readiness is a district’s ability to continuously improve aspects of its HCMS. As a relatively early adopter of career pathways for teachers, Colorado’s Eagle County Schools (ECS) reviewed its program in collaboration with its teachers and teacher leaders. The district found that, as a whole, teachers view the program as valuable for providing peer coaching and support, collaboration, professional development, classroom observations, and formative feedback. At the same time, they cited a need for more time with students, consistent release time for teacher leaders, less emphasis on evaluation, and more training and support to help teacher leaders effectively coach their peers. As a result of this research process, the district redesigned its teacher leadership model to reflect student learning as its driving force, which connects with the passion teachers have about their profession. As ECS’ successes and improvement efforts show, teacher leadership programs hold great promise in engaging high-performing educators and strengthening schools, but teacher input on an ongoing basis is critical to maximizing the value of those programs.

“TEACHING IS A PROFESSION WHICH TAKES YEARS AND PERSONAL DEDICATION TO MASTER. OUR STUDENTS SUFFER WHEN THERE IS CONSTANT TEACHER TURNOVER AND A SHORTAGE OF QUALIFIED TEACHERS IN THE CLASSROOM. WE MUST ASK OURSELVES SERIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT WHAT WE CAN DO TO TURN THIS TIDE, AND EVEN MORE SERIOUS QUESTIONS ABOUT WHETHER WE HAVE THE COURAGE AND COMMITMENT TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT.”

—Jason Glass, Superintendent, Eagle County Schools, Colorado



Salt River Schools (SRS)—which serves 900 students in the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community in Arizona—is empowering its Human Resources department to help the district attract and retain educators with high levels of instructional excellence and cultural competence. The district is using standards for human capital leaders in education, developed by BFK, the American Association of School Personnel Administrators (AASPA), and school and district partners, to ensure its readiness to implement a comprehensive HCMS. Salt River’s work has included:

- **Needs Assessment:** Professional standards for human capital leaders in education served as the foundation for a comprehensive needs assessment to uncover organizational strengths and growth areas. Self-assessments and interviews also revealed professional interests of each HR department employee.
- **Developing Experts:** Each HR employee assumes specific areas of expertise to ensure the HCMS functions effectively.
- **Structural Improvements:** Updated job descriptions for all positions, training for HR employees in their specialty areas, a re-envisioned HR department that engages more directly with school leaders and central office departments, and the identification of measures of success for all schools and departments increase organizational alignment and position SRS to implement strategic HCMS practices.

As a result of its early efforts, SRS has increased community support and engagement, as evidenced by improved attendance at school events and board meetings, and Tribal Council involvement in SRS activities. Departments and schools also share regular, data-driven reports with the Education Board and Tribal Council on the district’s goals, priorities, and measures of success.



Finally, districts should consider how their plans for attracting and retaining teachers can be sustained long term. Maricopa County Education Service Agency (MCESA), in collaboration with local school districts in the Phoenix, Arizona area, has demonstrated the power of an effective sustainability strategy. As the recipient of a large TIF grant, MCESA aimed to help districts attract and retain teachers in high-demand grades and subjects through a comprehensive human capital strategy involving differentiated compensation, a career ladder system, and improved hiring processes. Using a train-the-trainer model, MCESA has ensured that each participating district has a group of experts who can implement essential HR practices at the local level. For instance, school principals and peer observers have received extensive training around the locally designed classroom observation instrument, and have demonstrated high levels of inter-rater reliability in their classroom observation scores. Similar to the approaches used in Long Beach and Salt River, MCESA-supported districts are leveraging in-house expertise to ensure long-term success. **These individuals are now able to train others within their district as needed, thereby reducing program costs that are estimated to run upwards of \$1,800 per year, per teacher evaluated if managed at the county level** (Finster, Heneman, & Milanowski, 2014).

IN SUMMARY

The astronaut and teacher, Christa McAuliffe, said, “I touch the future. I teach.” The impact of a teacher starts with a student and reverberates through the classroom, the school, and the community. While teacher shortages continue to be a challenge across the country, many districts are making promising strides in employing strategic HR practices to build strong talent pipelines. Doing so is crucial not only to fill needed positions in the short term, but also to elevate the profession in ways that recognize how important teachers are to the success of our students, communities, and the nation.

DISCUSSION GUIDE FOR ATTRACTING AND RETAINING EDUCATORS

Directions: Have the leadership team responsible for developing your district’s HCMS respond to each area below independently by selecting the responses that best reflect current practices. Then, use the discussion questions provided on page 13 to compare responses and identify next steps as a team.

STEP 1: USE DATA TO ASSESS STRENGTHS, NEEDS, AND CHALLENGES			
OUR DISTRICT COLLECTS DATA ON:	CONSISTENTLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY
External labor market trends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Internal staffing trends (e.g., retirement, turnover, shortage areas)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sources of our most effective teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employee engagement and satisfaction	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Workplace diversity	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Equity of access to effective teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Effectiveness of programs designed to attract and retain teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
OUR DISTRICT USES DATA TO:			
Project staffing needs in advance	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inform or improve recruitment strategies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Inform or improve retention strategies	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
STEP 2: DEVELOP A PLAN TO ATTRACT AND RETAIN TALENTED TEACHERS			
OUR DISTRICT USES THESE STRATEGIES TO ATTRACT TEACHERS:	CONSISTENTLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY
Create an organizational brand and related online/print materials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Employ a variety of recruitment strategies to cast a wide net	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Build partnerships with organizations known to provide top talent	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Use grow-your-own, nontraditional staffing, or other creative ideas	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
OUR DISTRICT USES THESE STRATEGIES TO RETAIN TEACHERS:			
Use multiple data points for hiring to ensure employee-organization fit	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Implement comprehensive onboarding programs for new teachers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Customize professional development based on teachers’ needs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Offer career ladders and other advancement opportunities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Align compensation with organizational priorities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Implement programs to recognize excellent teaching	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
STEP 3: IMPLEMENT AND CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE THE PLAN			
OUR HCMS:	CONSISTENTLY	SOMETIMES	RARELY
Is aligned with the organizational strategic plan	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Has buy-in and support across all levels of the organization	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Uses processes to review and improve human capital programs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Is financially sustainable	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
THE INDIVIDUALS WHO MANAGE THE HCMS:			
Have expertise in all essential HR functions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Are encouraged to employ transactional and strategic HR practices	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Provide excellent customer service	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR ATTRACTING AND RETAINING EDUCATORS

As you and your team reflect on responses to the Discussion Guide on page 12, which areas had the highest levels of agreement and disagreement? Why?

What are the strengths and areas for growth of our district and current HCMS?

What challenges do we face in attracting and/or retaining teachers?

How can we leverage identified strengths more effectively to attract and/or retain teachers?

To improve our HCMS, what must we accomplish over the next three months? Six months? Year?

STRATEGIES FOR ATTRACTING AND RETAINING EDUCATORS

Following are potential strategies to address the teacher shortage as curated through a national scan and BFK’s work with school districts across the country.

STEP 1: USE DATA TO ASSESS STRENGTHS, NEEDS, AND CHALLENGES	
FOCUS	STRATEGIES
<p>Data Analytics Use data proactively to prevent educator shortages and support organizational health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Collect and analyze data to understand staffing trends and organizational needs and strategies, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor market trends. • Staffing projections. • Shortage areas. • Equitable access to effective teachers. • Employee engagement and satisfaction. • Strengths and growth areas of the district and HCMS. • Effectiveness of programs or strategies to attract and retain teachers.

STEP 2A: DEVELOP A PLAN TO ATTRACT TALENTED TEACHERS	
FOCUS	STRATEGIES
<p>Workforce and Succession Planning Anticipate and strategically address staffing needs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Use data to predict and plan for turnover or retirees. <input type="checkbox"/> Share staff between buildings/districts/counties through in-person service delivery or virtual learning. <input type="checkbox"/> Consider retire/rehire programs to bring employees back to the district. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop the talent pipeline from within by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing fast-track certification for associate-degree holders. • Identifying promising school leaders among current staff. • Implementing grow-your-own strategies, such as: high school future-teacher programs; higher education partnerships; district-run licensure programs; paraprofessional development (stipends, scholarships, internships, etc.); student-teacher development, evaluation, and hiring; and support for current teachers to earn dual enrollment certification.
<p>Best Practice Scanning and HR Branding Define and develop an awareness of the key values, beliefs, and commitments associated with an organization and community that can attract high-potential individuals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Engage current high-performing staff in dialogue to identify the factors that attract them to your organization. <input type="checkbox"/> Uncover organizational values, strengths, and community highlights to inform the development and sharing of your district’s unique story. <input type="checkbox"/> Market your district to students and prospective employees. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop web/print recruiting materials that highlight organizational values and strengths.
<p>Sourcing and Strategic Recruitment Uncover sources of high-potential candidates by reviewing information on current successful employees.</p> <p>Apply focused and purposeful strategies to attract top talent to the organization.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Review current staff and organizational performance. <input type="checkbox"/> Identify core competencies necessary for success in specific roles. <input type="checkbox"/> Review the effectiveness of current recruitment practices and develop a targeted recruitment plan that involves social media; print; career fairs (traditional, virtual); networks; and professional associations, among other strategies. <input type="checkbox"/> Engage in recruitment planning that considers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geography. • Position type (STEM, CTE, languages, SPED, building leaders, support staff). • Population (minority, disabled, veteran, over 40). • Preparation type (traditional, alternative). <input type="checkbox"/> Build partnerships with colleges/universities; alternative certification providers; and other local, state, and federal entities to support recruitment. <input type="checkbox"/> Use online tools and strategies to search for new sources of potential candidates (e.g., job boards, Boolean operators, and search commands). <input type="checkbox"/> Establish early and rolling-deadline recruiting. <input type="checkbox"/> Recruit retired professionals or career changers.

STEP 2B: DEVELOP A PLAN TO RETAIN TALENTED TEACHERS

FOCUS	STRATEGIES
<p>Selection and Placement Select high-quality candidates using multiple data points and place them in positions that maximize individual and organizational success.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Identify multiple, appropriate measures, tools, and strategies for employee selection. <input type="checkbox"/> Establish early/earlier hiring. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure the highest customer service for job applicants. <input type="checkbox"/> Use data to place employees in the schools and positions where they will be the most effective.
<p>Onboarding Socialize new employees into the key cultural aspects of an organization.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Design onboarding and mentoring systems that position employees for success from the start. <input type="checkbox"/> Highlight community support/social programs (e.g., young professionals, religious organizations, chambers of commerce, volunteering) for new employees.
<p>Professional Development and Personalized Pathways Grow employees' skills, knowledge, and abilities through training, coaching, mentoring, and professional opportunities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Grow district and building leaders' capacity for talent management and strategic HR. <input type="checkbox"/> Offer support and growth opportunities to new and veteran teachers that reflect their needs, abilities, and experience. <input type="checkbox"/> Define and fill innovative professional pathways through which individuals can more broadly impact and expand their role in the organization.
<p>Compensation and Benefits Align total compensation to organizational goals and strategies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Regularly review compensation and benefits to ensure market competitiveness. <input type="checkbox"/> Differentiate compensation to recruit and reward staff in high-need positions. <input type="checkbox"/> Offer incentives based upon district and employee needs (e.g., referral bonus, signing bonus, relocation assistance, loan forgiveness, tuition reimbursement). <input type="checkbox"/> Identify employees' preferred rewards through surveys or other means. <input type="checkbox"/> Offer creative, non-monetary benefits (e.g., preferential scheduling, priority enrollment for teachers' children). <input type="checkbox"/> Leverage community/district programs (e.g., tax rebates, community housing, housing assistance). <input type="checkbox"/> Provide spouse/partner job assistance.

STEP 3: IMPLEMENT AND CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE THE PLAN

FOCUS	STRATEGIES
<p>Strategic Planning Identify organizational goals and direction, as well as a plan of action to achieve them.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Engage key stakeholders in developing district and department-level strategies and measures of success to improve organizational health and support educator recruitment and retention. <input type="checkbox"/> Create a strategic communications plan to share the strategic plan in ways that build positive energy and momentum. <input type="checkbox"/> Build a quality profile that monitors the district’s progress in reaching its goals and communicates what measures matter to students, educators, and the community. <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure the district’s HCMS aligns with its strategic plan.
<p>System Readiness and Sustainability Prepare organizational infrastructure to ensure successful implementation and sustainability of new programs and processes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Plan for implementation and sustainability of innovative recruitment and retention strategies (e.g., alternative certification, grow-your-own programs). <input type="checkbox"/> Engage in financial modeling to gauge fiscal sustainability of new programs or initiatives.
<p>HR Development Increase building and central office administrators’ capacity to manage talent by developing knowledge and skills around core HR competencies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Offer training and support to build the capacity of school leaders and district administrators to manage talent. <input type="checkbox"/> Empower district employees to provide excellent customer service to educators at every school.
<p>Performance Management and Continuous Improvement Improve strategic alignment, process efficiency, and the customer experience to support organizational health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Survey school-based employees around satisfaction with district services. <input type="checkbox"/> Implement customer service initiatives. <input type="checkbox"/> Use district and building data to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support decision making. • Develop data dashboards and scorecards to track progress toward district goals and improved student outcomes. <input type="checkbox"/> Develop school and department scorecards aligned with organizational strategic goals.

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HUMAN CAPITAL LEADERS IN EDUCATION CERTIFICATION

Battelle for Kids, in collaboration with the American Association of School Personnel Administrators (AASPA), is pleased to announce the development of a certification program for human capital leaders in Pre-K–12 education.

As many school districts struggle to recruit and retain top talent and ensure equitable access to excellent educators, schools need knowledgeable and skilled human capital professionals now more than ever. The certification program is rooted in new professional standards that outline the competencies that human capital leaders should master to:

- Develop comprehensive human capital management systems (HCMS).
- Manage key human capital decisions, in areas, such as workforce planning, recruitment, hiring, placement, compensation, promotion, and professional development.
- Balance strategic and transactional HR practices.
- Build a cohesive HCMS through branding and communication.
- Maximize the use of data for continuous improvement.
- Implement the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and other state and federal policies impacting human capital in education.

“THE HCLE PROGRAM PROVIDED ME WITH INVALUABLE RESOURCES THAT ALLOWED ME TO RETURN TO MY DISTRICT AND ESTABLISH PROCESSES WITH IMMEDIATE POSITIVE RESULTS. MANY TIMES, HR PROFESSIONALS DO NOT SEE THEMSELVES AS HAVING AN IMPACT ON STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT, BUT WE HAVE A PROFOUND AND DIRECT IMPACT ON THE QUALITY OF THE TEACHERS WHO ARE HIRED AND PLACED IN CLASSROOMS EVERY DAY AND THAT IMPACTS STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT!”

—Steffanie Frost, Director of Human Resources, McMinnville School District, Oregon

Learn more about the certification program at HCEdLeaders.org.

Battelle for Kids

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